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ABSTRACT

Sinclair Community College (SCC) in Dayton, Ohio has designed a career development workshop for both hourly and salaried employees of Monarch Marking, Inc., to help the local industry to encourage its motivated employees to set and start working toward new career goals within the company. From 12 to 15 employees take part in each 16-hour, three-part workshop. The first session consists of orientation to the concept of career development, and a round-table discussion with management representatives to discuss job opportunities in different areas of the company. The second session, which is led by staff members from the Career Planning and Placement Center of SCC features three activities: (1) self-assessment of transferable skills; (2) work values clarification; and (3) exploration of identified careers. During the third session, the employees reconvene with college personnel for individual career counseling and wrap-up. Because programs of this nature often result in employees returning to their jobs with a variety of questions, the company's human resource planning and development staff conducts a meeting for supervisors of employees who have taken part in the workshops. Of the workshop participants, approximately 16% of the hourly employees have been promoted to salaried positions, while another 15% transferred to other areas of the company to start working toward their career objectives. (EJV)

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Career Development in the Workplace: Academia and Industry Join Hands

by
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Career Development in the Workplace: Academia and Industry Join Hands

Recruitment and retention. Developing new markets. Dwindling student pool. Adult learners. New sources of revenue.

Employee career development. Career plateaus. Quality of worklife. Career management.

These buzzphrases from academia and business are indicative of the mid-80's as colleges seek to recruit and retain students, and business and industry look for ways to help their employees gain greater job satisfaction and productivity.

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To both ends, Sinclair Community College in Dayton, Ohio, has designed a career development workshop for both hourly and salaried employees of a local industry - Monarch Marking, Inc., a division of Pitney Bowes. The workshop was created to help the industry encourage its motivated employees to take steps to set and start working toward new career goals within the company, but a side effect has been the employees' increased enrollment at Sinclair.

Steps in the Career Development Workshop

Twelve to fifteen employees take part in each 16-hour workshop which consists of three sessions. New groups start about every two months.

The first phase of the program consists of orientation to the concept of career development presented by Monarch Marking Human Resource Planning and Development staff and Del M. Vaughan, Director of Career Planning and Placement at Sinclair.

Vaughan presents an overview of Sinclair's contribution to the workshop and administers John Holland's "Self-Directed Search." The "Self-Directed Search", or SDS, helps its users identify their interests and skills and relate them to careers.

The SDS's are scored, interpreted, and are then collected by Vaughan, who takes them to Sinclair for use at the second session.

The first session also features a round table discussion with management representatives to discuss job opportunities in different areas of the company.

The second and third sessions are conducted at Sinclair Community College. Each employee is given a career planning workbook containing exercise materials plus other career planning resources.

The second session is led by staff members from the Career Planning and Placement Center of the college. It begins with the entire group's getting acquainted and discussing workshop expectations. They are helped to identify their "dream job" and some of its components, and their own strengths and accomplishments. Their "Self-Directed Search" results are reviewed and discussed.

At this point they divide into small groups and cycle through three activities, each lasting forty-five minutes and conducted by a college staff member. The activities are:

- self-assessment of transferable skills
- work values clarification
- exploration of identified careers

The skill identification exercise used is "The Quick Job-Hunting Map," the functional/transferable skills inventory from Richard N. Bolles's perennial best-seller What Color Is Your Parachute?.

The work-values clarification exercise developed by the Career Planning and Placement Center staff allows the participants to assess their current jobs, analyzing them for work values, (i.e. job security, helping others, creativity, etc.), identifying their most important values and relating them to jobs.

Through the "Ohio Career Information System", a computerized career guidance information-retrieval system, participants explore careers generated by their use of the "Self-Directed Search" or other careers in which they have interest. Career information produced by this system includes description of job; related interests, aptitudes and values, training and where to get it; related jobs, and other information.

At the end of the second session the participants are given their assignments to complete the "Quick Job-Hunting Map", the values clarification summary, and short and long range goal-setting exercises. And finally, they complete a career development plan of action in which they individualize what they've learned, forming a career plan of their own.

Setting Goals and Developing a Plan

At the third session the employees reconvene with college personnel for individual career counseling and wrap-up. Each Monarch employee spends 30 minutes with a college staff member. Each discusses whatever he or she wants, based on the results of the self-assessment activities.

The discussion typically springs from the participants' stated career development plan of action, but counseling can evolve from experience, ideas, or feelings the employee wants to share. In counseling, the employee is led back to the "dream job" exercise which was completed early in the workshop and asked if it still measures up to the goals set with newly acquired self-knowledge.

The wrap-up gives the participants a chance to discuss their experiences in the large group, ask questions, and make comments. Career development as a life-long process is emphasized, and the employees come away with the philosophy that they are responsible for their own career planning, aided by resources.

Implementing the Plan

After completing the assessment provided by Sinclair Community College staff, the employees meet with members of the Monarch Marking Human Resource Planning and Development staff to discuss career changes and what is needed to achieve their goals.

Because programs of this nature often result in employees returning to their jobs with a variety of questions, the Monarch Marking Human Resource Planning and Development staff conducts a meeting for supervisors of employees who take part in the career development workshops. Supervisors are given the overview of the workshop and are prepared to answer employees' questions.

Of the Monarch Marking employees who have participated in the career development workshops, approximately 16% of the hourly employees were promoted to salaried positions, while another 15% transferred to other areas of the company to start working toward their career objectives. The Human Resource staff feels that without the workshop many of those employees would have remained in their previous positions.

A side benefit of the program is that many of the participants take courses and pursue degrees at Sinclair Community College once they have set their career goals. Demand for courses has been so high that Sinclair is now teaching courses at the Monarch Marking plant.

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